[For historical sketches of cities, see category 369 or Index, category 116, 6: Spate AW1 India.]

631 of Travancore and the Travancore legislative assembly, with headquarters in the capital, Trivandrum. On July 1st, 1949, by order of the Central Legislative Assembly in Delhi, the two southern states were integrated as the United States of Travancore and Cochin. The Maharaja of Cochin retired from office, and the Maharaja of Travancore became for the duration of his life the first Rajpramukh of the new united state. The State now has its headquarters and government offices [5] at Trivandrum.

101 Despite these partly accidental political divi-
197 sions, the Malabar Coast is a discrete cultural area. Malayalam, (a Dravidian language strongly influenced in vocabulary by Sanskrit) which became distinguished as a deviant dialect of Tamil about the twelfth century, is the mother-tongue of all but a few immigrant Tamil groups in south Travancore. The area has also had some degree of political unity in the distant
• 174 past as the ancient kingdom of Kerala. The early history of Kerala is unknown. It was ruled by the Perumals, a succession of kings who seem to have come from outside Kerala and who may have been feudatories in the wider em-
175 pire of Chera. Their government came to an end sometime between the fourth and eleventh centuries A.D. After this Kerala was split into many petty kingdoms under indigenous Rajas of Nayar stock, having matrilineal descent. These continually fought each other and, from 1498, with the coming of the Portuguese and later the Dutch, English and French, made various alliances with these powers to gain their

175 individual ends. Their struggles were eclipsed by the Muslim invasions from Mysore which began in 1766, and ended when the East Indian Company took over the area in 1792. But the idea of a United Kerala has not died, and has been repeatedly suggested since India attained [6] Independence in 1947.

161 (3) Population

The Malabar Coast is the most densely populated part of India. The figures for 1931 show a population of 3,533,944 for Malabar; 1,205,016 for Cochin; and 5,095,073 for Travancore. In Malabar the mean density was 610 per square mile; in Cochin, 814; and in Travancore, 668. This includes forest and lagoon areas. The mean density of habitable land in Cochin was 1,400.

[511] Relative to the present exploitation of resources the whole coast is overpopulated. Most of the people lead a hand-to-mouth existence on an income barely sufficient to support life. Want and indebtedness are chronic and there is much unemployment.

Reliable figures are not available for before 1891, but at least since that date and probably for 50 to 100 years previsouly, a great increase has taken place. The figures for 1891 were, for Malabar, 2,557,736; fo Cochin, 722,906; and for Travancore, 2,557,736. This increase in population is part of the baseline from which we must start in analysing kinship systems.

174 631 II The Traditional Political Background

European and Arabic reports on the Nayars

174 take us back to before 1498, when Basco da Gama
631 first reached Calicut. From the mid-fifteenth century until the present, there is a fairly continuous series of records, by Arab, Portuguese, Dutch and later East India Company traders, and finally by British government officials and by Malayalis themselves. We may conveniently refer to the period before 1792, when the East India Company assumed government, as the period of the traditional political and economic organization, in contrast to the period between 1792 and 1947, which is the period of British
[127] rule. My picture of the traditional social structure is a composite reconstruction from literature and from the reports of my informants. It is not possible in the limits of this paper to give the derivation of each statement, but a bibliography appears at the end.

It seems clear from the literature that from the breakdown of the ancient kingdom of Kerala (c. 7th century?) until about the 14th century, the coast was divided into many small independent chiefdoms (nads.) Each nad was headed by a petty military chief of the Nayar caste. Sometime in the 9th century, the area was revisited by Arab traders after a long absence, who began to trade with the coastal chiefdoms in pepper and coconuts. Sometime between the 11th and 13th centuries, gunpowder was introduced by the Arabs, and it appears to have been from this date that some of the chiefs began to conquer neighbouring chiefdoms and to organize small kingdoms. By the early 15th century, the chief of these kingdoms were, from north to south,

174 631 those of Kolattunad, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Kadattunad, Calicut, and Walluvanad (in what is now Malabar District), Cochin (the modern Cochin State) and to the south, the various feudatory chiefdoms of the kingdom of Travancore. By 1496 when the Portuguese arrived, however, the Zamorin (king) of Calicut, who had gained power by extensive Arab trade, had temporarily conquered the Walluvanad and Cochin kingdoms and reduced their rulers to the status of vassal lords. The Portuguese, allied with the Cochin Raja, drove back the Zamorin northward our of Cochin during the 16th century. From then on, wars between the major kingdoms were incessant for the next three centuries. The English reached Malabar in 1615, the Dutch in 1639, and the French in 1725. Each European trading power allied itself with one or other kingdom and took part in successive battles until, in 1763, the northern half of the coast was temporarily overrun by Muslim armies from Mysore to the northeast. The Mysorean invasions ended in 1792 with the settlement of the whole area by the British East India Company, and the establishment of the modern British political organization.

101 [9] Today, the coast is still divisible into three major areas, distinguished by differences in the names and numbers of the castes who occupy them, by slight differences of dialect, dress and dietetic habits, and more marked differences in ritual beliefs and practices, and most markedly, by differences in the kinship systems of the several Hindu castes. The nothern area is that of the modern North Malabar District, north

of the Kora River, comprising the former kingdoms of Kolattiri, Kottayam, Kadattunad and part of Kurumbranad. The central area comprises the modern South Malabar District and Cochin State (the former kingdoms of Calicut, Walluvanad and Cochin), and the southern area, the kingdom of Travancore. In the course of fieldwork it became clear that these overall differences of custom and social structure were connected with major political boundaries in the period of native rule. Though divisible into separate small kingdoms and chiefdoms, the whole of North Malabar District was temporarily overrun by the Kolattiri Rajas in the 16th and 17th centuries. The central area at one period or another was all conquered by the Zamorins and incorporated in the Calicut empire, while the whole southern area eventually became subject to the Travancore Rajas. In each of these three major areas, a somewhat different political system operated, [10] and in accordance with this the higher castes, especially the Nayars, were differently divided into subcastes with separate administrative functions: each of these subcastes in turn had a kinship system influenced by its occupation, relationship to the land, and separate historical tradition. Much confusion has arisen in past discussion of Nayar kinship because of failure to differentiate between the three areas: it was assumed that the Nayars had one kinship system, whereas they in fact had three, with different terminological structures. In this paper I describe the traditional and modern political structures and the Nayar kinship

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

Pandya, appears to have grown powerful on the basis of trade with Rome. Like Chola and Pandya, it was a Tamil kingdom; Malayalam, the modern language of Kerala, did not diverge from Tamil until about the tenth century (Sastri, 1955: 400). It is clear from the Tamil literature of the Sangam period that the basic features of Kerala's division of labor, caste system and village organization, must have developed during or before the Chera period (*ibid.*: 110–140). The three South Indian kingdoms temporarily disintegrated in the late third century, probably as a result of a sharp decline in Roman trade.

There is no mention of any matrilineal caste like the Nayars in the Chera kingdom. When and whence they came is uncertain. The most plausible suggestion is that during the Chera period they were a matrilineal hill tribe occupying the Ghats under chiefs who owed a tenuous allegiance to the Chera kings. They may have descended to the Kerala plains as invading barbarians about the fourth century, when the Chera kingdom collapsed (Ayyar, 1938: 43). Little is known of Kerala between the Chera period and the thirteenth century. All or a part of it passed under the rule of a succession of viceroys (Perumals) from various South Indian kingdoms to the east of the Ghats. The date of the last Perumal is quite uncertain. Many writers concur in placing him in the early ninth century, but he may possibly have lived as late as the thirteenth. Nayar chiefs and Nayar soldiers are first mentioned in three copperplate inscriptions, tentatively dated late seventh, mid-eighth, and early ninth centuries. The inscriptions record grants of land and judicial privileges on the coast to settlements of Jewish and Syrian Christian traders (Logan, 1887, I: 265). The grants were made by rulers of Kerala, presumably Perumals, and were witnessed by Nayar chiefs of Venad, Ernad, Walluvanad, and Palghat. All these districts were famous Nayar chiefdoms in the later periods and persisted until the eighteenth century. The plates suggest that Nayar chiefs with private armies had emerged as vassals of the Perumals at least by the ninth century. By the mid-thirteenth century, at the latest, the greater Nayar chiefs had become independent small kings, and the Perumals had disappeared.

Chinese had resumed trade with Kerala sometime in the Perumal period, and in the thirteenth century this trade greatly expanded under the empire of Kubla Khan. Concomitantly, two coastal Nayar chiefdoms with strategic ports expanded into small kingdoms by conquering the surrounding inland chiefdoms and monopolizing their trade. In the north was the Kolattiri kingdom centered about Mount Eli, and in the south the kingdom of Travancore or Venad, centered

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

Caste and Territorial Divisions

THE HIGH CASTES

564 *The Nambudiri Brahmans* Throughout Kerala the Nambudiri Brahmans were the highest Hindu caste and the ritual and scholastic leaders. Today they form one hundredth of the population (Censuses of Madras, Cochin, and Travancore, 1931). Carriers of the Sanskrit language and of ancient Vedic culture, they are thought to have entered Malabar from the eastern plateau sometime after the fall of the Chera kingdom (Logan, 1951, I: 121, 243; Ayyar, 1938: 47). Most Nambudiris were landlords of substance, but they included a number of ranked occupational sub-castes of varying wealth. The greater landlords were managers of large temples, promulgators of religious law, legal advisers of the kings, priests of public sacrifices, or philosophers and Vedic scholars. The lower sub-castes, whose members owned smaller estates, included temple priests, physicians, and household priests and professional cooks who officiated at ceremonies in the Nayar castes.

564 The Nambudiris ranked ritually above the kings and were to some extent above and outside the political systems of the kingdoms. Alone of all the castes, they moved unmolested between enemy kingdoms. They held ceremonies attended by their caste fellows from all parts of Kerala and carried on their system of intra-caste administration independently of the administration of justice within the kingdoms. For the latter purpose they divided Kerala into *gramams* (caste areas) (Logan, 1951, I: 120). Over the whole region a dignitary called the Aravancheri Tamburakkal, who lived in the Calicut kingdom, was universally acknowledged as the ritual and administrative leader of the Nambudiris (Buchanan, 1807: 423–426; Ayyar, 1938: 23). He held the right to install the kings of both Calicut and Cochin, even though these rulers were traditionally at enmity. The field of social relations of the Nambudiris was thus the whole of Kerala and they played a role not dissimilar to that of the medieval Catholic church. Descent among the Nambudiris was patrilineal.

564 *The High-Caste Nayars* Below the Nambudiri Brahmans in ritual rank came the royal *matrilineages* of the several kingdoms. Those in Central Kerala were Calicut, Walluvanad, Palghat, and Cochin. Although of Nayar origin, each of these lineages considered itself superior in ritual rank to the Nayar subjects within its kingdom. Between kingdoms, royal lineages disputed for rank and would not intermarry. Although exogamous, therefore, each royal lineage considered

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

property groups were held legally responsible for Nayar men only when they committed high treason or when they became engaged in disputes and offenses within the neighborhood of their birth.

It seems probable that the kāranavan's powers over his juniors and over their property were limited by the codification of law which came about during British rule (Aiyar, 1922: 33–132). It is not clear whether he could traditionally alienate land without the consent of other adults of the taravād; during British rule he could not. British law also permitted appeal to the court by junior members for the removal of a kāranavan who could be shown guilty of gross mismanagement. He could then be set aside in favor of his immediate junior. An inefficient kāranavan could moreover be forced by the court to maintain accounts of his income and expenditure. Since 1933 in Malabar District and 1938 in Cochin, all kāranavans have been legally obliged to do this and to make available their accounts for inspection by junior members once a year, as provided in the Madras Marumakkattayam (Matriliny) Act, 1933, and the Cochin Nayar Act, 1938. However, few juniors avail themselves of this right, which is evidently repugnant to the traditional ideals of obedience and trust toward elders of the taravād.

Even traditionally, however, both junior men and women were often consulted in the management of the group's affairs. If a dispute arose between minimal segments of the taravād it was common for appeal to be made to an arbitrator of the caste from outside the lineage. The settlement agreed upon would be embodied in a document called a *kārār*, which legally bound all adult members. In large taravāds the allocation of separate houses and sometimes even of separate land to each segment was usually embodied in a kārār. All land continued to be managed by the kāranavan, but he paid a sum of paddy each year to the senior woman of each household from the land allotted to her segment.

Kārārs were, however, common only in village headmen's, chiefly, and royal property groups. Too little property was usually involved in the case of retainer Nayars, among whom effective daily management was divided between the kāranavan and the oldest woman. As we have seen, the former carried out all formal transactions outside the group, controlled the estate *in toto*, and disciplined men and boys. The latter organized feminine tasks and held more informal authority over women and small children. When the kāranavan was the son or younger brother of the eldest woman, management usually ran particularly smoothly. The oldest woman might indeed be *de facto* head

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

613 592 174 It seems probable that the property groups of retainer Nayars divided somewhat earlier in their development during the nineteenth century than during the period of native rule. The reason for this is that during British rule Nayar men, having no other compulsory work, considered themselves old enough to become kāranavans by the age of thirty to forty, provided their appropriate elders were dead. In the traditional period, presumably, a man would be in arms until at least the age of fifty and would be unlikely to press for kāranavanship before that age.

613 592 161 174 [175] Further differences in the patterns of division of property groups must have arisen from the marked increase in population during British rule. This is not documented until after the 1870's but from genealogies it appears to have begun between four and five generations ago. The increase would mean that more women, and a higher proportion of women, would have had enough living children to become the founders of discrete lineage segments during their lives or shortly after their deaths. Thus property groups in the nineteenth century would divide not only at an earlier point in their structural development but also more frequently than was the case during native rule.

613 592 174 423 The absolute size of traditional property groups was limited by the amount of land available to each. It can be roughly gauged by the size of the houses they left behind. It seems unlikely that a traditional retainer property group would contain more than twenty-five to thirty people, or fewer than six.

Interpersonal Kinship Relationships

121 I describe the relationships between kinsfolk as these have existed in the recent past in the most "traditional" households, making reference to earlier periods when this is possible.

WOMAN-SON

593 The relationship of mother and son was the strongest in the system in the sense of mutual obligation and the expectation of mutual love. A man should place the needs of his mother above those of all other [858] kin. A woman should show equal concern for her children of both sexes, but it was expected that her primary attachment would be to her sons.

[853] [863] [867] A woman's obligations to both daughters and sons in their early childhood included breast feeding to the age of two or three, care, especially in sickness, and instruction in cleanliness and in the manners and morals of their caste.

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A WII Kerala A WII
Central Kerala Nayar

a favor"; and the Dutch Captain Nieuhoff observed in 1664 that "It is commonly reported in these parts, that the kings of Venmani made a law, by which a man was empowered to kill any woman that should refuse him a kindness" (quoted in K. P. P. Menon, 1908: vii–viii). These quotations are especially interesting because they suggest that, in Travancore as in Central Kerala, plural unions on the part of women were not merely permissible but, in theory at least, enforceable by law. 595 175 184

Similarly, Nayar informants of a village near Haripad in Central Travancore told me that they understood that "long ago" Nayars of Travancore had the institution of the visiting husband together with polygyny and non-fraternal polyandry, like Central Kerala Nayars. The same informants reported that during the nineteenth century, after the Nayar armies were disbanded, residence became avunculocal among Nayars in this area of Travancore, non-fraternal polyandry died out, and for a few decades some Nayars practised fraternal polyandry, with a group of brothers assuming collective responsibility for one or more co-resident wives and their young children. Other writers also mention relatively modern cases of fraternal polyandry among Travancore Nayars (Iyer, 1932; Fawcett, 1901: 241). Later in the nineteenth century and during this century, however, Travancore matrilineal property groups began to disintegrate, and fraternal polyandry gave place to monogamy. The Central Travancore sequence of duolocality with group marriage, to avunculocality with fraternal polyandry, to partial neolocality with monogamy, is an interesting one in view of the fact that fraternal polyandry has, as far as I am aware, always been strictly forbidden among both duolocal Nayars of Central Kerala and avunculocal Nayars of North Kerala throughout the historical period. I was able to spend only a fortnight in Travancore and could not pursue the comparison. 595 175 184 178 [591] [114]

The marriage of a woman to more than one man concurrently is not confined to the Nayars in southwest India. The double unilineal Tiyyars and some other higher polluting castes of Central Kerala had fraternal polyandry, and both fraternal and non-fraternal polyandry were customary among the Toda tribe of the Nilgiri hills. The Coorgs to the east of North Kerala are also said to have had fraternal polyandry associated with patrilineal descent groups. The prevalence of various types of polyandry in southwest India generally suggests that *some* form of plural unions for women may have been very ancient among the Nayars, possibly predating their organization into kingdoms. 595 171 [194]

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWI1 Kerala AWI1
North Kerala Nayar

439 food and other goods. The population expanded and much formerly
[161] waste land was brought under cultivation as gardens for the produc-
[241] tion of coconuts, pepper, cashew nuts, and cinnamon. Higher in the
[464] mountains Europeans developed estates of tea, coffee, and spices,
[496] which attracted wage labor from villages to the west. The develop-
ment of the steamship, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and
the entry of railways into Kerala in the 1860's were significant events
in this process.

564 **Political and Economic Systems**

[566] Traditionally, a hierarchy of the major Hindu castes was present as
in Central Kerala, except that large areas of North Kerala had no
Pulayas or agricultural serfs (*ibid.*, I: 148). Nambudiri Brahmans
were fewer than in Central Kerala, but they controlled a small num-
439 ber of temple estates and claimed religious superiority over the Nayar
563 rulers. Muslims were the dominant trading population of the ports
and inland trading centers.

631 The mountainous terrain, heavy rainfall, poor communications,
sparse population, and comparatively low productivity made politi-
cal centralization more difficult than in Central Kerala. The ancient
Kolattiri kingdom was divided into chiefdoms and villages in a man-
ner similar to the later kingdom of the Zamorin, but judicial con-
trol was perhaps never as well centralized as in the Calicut kingdom.
175 From the fourteenth century, when the Zamorins captured most of
635 the Arab trade, the Kolattiri kingship lost some of its former power.
[634] The kingdom disintegrated into three smaller, virtually independent
kingdoms—Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad—plus a number
of small border chiefdoms of uncertain allegiance (*ibid.*, I: 343–344).
174 Each of the three North Kerala kingdoms probably had a population
161 of between 150,000 and 250,000, in contrast to the Calicut kingdom,
635 which seems to have numbered some 600,000 to 720,000 (see note
5, page 473).

175 After 1500 each of the North Kerala rulers sought the help of one
648 or another of the mutually hostile European and Middle Eastern trad-
634 ing powers, thus maintaining a state of fragmentation until the My-
635 sorean conquest. In the struggles of the seventeenth and eighteenth
centuries some new Nayar chiefs also arose with mushroom rapidity
on the basis of European support and gained partially autonomous
sway over small groups of villages. Political and social mobility among
Nayar aristocrats was thus more marked in North Kerala than in the
more stable central kingdoms. Indeed, a North Kerala proverb re-

4: Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952)1958 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar
Tamil AW16
Tanjore Brahma
K

however intimately related to his children he may have been, he belongs to a different economic and legal corporation. In death as in life, he has no publicly supported authority over his children. Children do have a personalized relationship with their father's spirit in Kottayam, however, which is discussed below.

The emotional content of the relationships with lineage ghosts among the Nāyars does not depend upon the fact that they follow matrilineal descent, although of course the role-structure of the cult is determined by this fact. The Iravas[13] of this area, who are tenant cultivators of lower rank than the Nāyars, have small patrilineal lineages and patrilocal extended families, cross-cut, traditionally, by dispersed exogamous matrilineal clans. The Irava patrilineage is called a *taravād* and is headed by its senior male member as *kāranavan*. The Iravas have a cult of dead patrilineal *kāranavans* almost identical in emotional and belief content with that of Nāyars. So also do the Coorgs, a patrilineal caste of the small province east of Kottayam, well described by Srinivas.[14] The common form of the cult and the similarity of detail in this general area must undoubtedly be attributed to diffusion or to a common historical origin. Nevertheless, the question then arises of why this cult was not diffused to all castes of the southwest coast, notably to the Brahmans. Conversely, we may ask why the Brahmanical cult of ancestors, which is quite different in form and content, did not entirely replace the ancestral cults of the non-Brahman castes centuries ago—for these castes have been exposed to Brahmanical culture probably for two thousand years and have in fact adopted many elements of that culture. Moreover, cults of punitive ancestors similar to the Nāyar cult are very widespread in the world. It seems certain that whatever their historical origin, the reasons for the perpetuation of these cults must be sought in the role-structure of the kinship system and the emotional content of relationships with major figures of the senior generation within it. I would suggest that cults of predominantly punitive ancestors are likely to be accompanied by kinship relationships in which the senior generation retains control over the junior until late in life, but in which major figures of the senior generation are not highly idealized. It seems probable that the chief sanction against value-violating behavior will be fear of some tangible form of punishment, rather than fear over loss of love, and that although open expression of aggression toward disciplinary figures is controlled, the aggressive component in the ambivalent relationship to seniors will be strong and not deeply repressed. Among Nāyars and Iravas of my acquaintance, at all events, a man may even be conscious of his ambivalence toward seniors, and to the extent that he is not able fully to accept his own aggressive feelings he seems to project these in the belief that his superiors are even more punitive than they may really be. A portion of this projected aggression his culture encourages him to displace on the figures of lineage ghosts, who can inflict even more serious punishments than can living superiors. As is frequently the case in our own society, the mechanism of projection seems to be closely allied with that of introjection, which appears in the belief that sickness and mental derangement are caused by the entry of a hostile ghost into the body of the patient.

The nature of traditional Nāyar relationships to their lineage ghosts may be clarified by contrasting them with those of Brahmans. I choose for this purpose the Tamil Brahmans of Tanjore,[15] with whom I am best acquainted. This caste of landowners and ritual specialists has patrilocal extended families and patrilineal lineages. Headship of the extended family does not, as among Iravas and Coorgs, pass down the line of

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

devolves through the men, the degrees between which marriage is prohibitive are inherited through the women.*

But the circumstance that inheritance through women was once, perhaps, the rule in Southern India cannot be accepted as of itself proof that the Nâyars are identical with the Dravidians, as the people of Southern India are commonly called. It is not yet time to say whether they are or are not. To the ordinary visitor their outward appearance, customs, habitations, mode of life generally, are very different from what he sees in the Telugu or Tamil countries; for Malabar, "the west coast," is as unlike the rest of the Presidency as Burma. The only other district of the Madras Presidency which resembles Malabar, is Ganjám, more particularly the northern part of it, where the people are almost entirely Aryan. The resemblance between these, the Uriyas of Gumsoor and thereabouts, a fine fighting stock, and the Nâyars of Malabar is very striking. It is not, perhaps, a mere coincidence that in these two furthest remote corners of the Presidency alone, the people at large are to be seen wearing umbrella hats to protect them from the sun.

The Nâyars are divided into clans, (we will call them clans for want of a better term), many of which intermingle through marriage, but some of them are endogamous. The precise number of these clans cannot be given, as it is disputed whether certain of them have a right to belong to the cognate Nâyar body. The names of the clans which have come directly under my measuring instruments are these:—

Kiriyattil.	Kitâvu.
Sûdra.	Pallichan.
Kurup.	Muppathinâyiran.
Nambiyâr.	Vlyâpâri or Râvâri.
Úrâli.	Attikkurissi.
Nalliôden.	Mânavallan.
Viyyûr.	Vengôlan.
Akattu Châma.	Adungâdi.
Purattu Châma.	Adiôdi.
Vattakkâd.	Âmayengolam.
Vangilôth.	

This list is not in order of priority.

* An example of this custom existing in another land may be quoted here from a modern book—'The Caroline Islands,' by F. W. Christian, 1899: "Descent is traced through the mother—a custom tolerably common amongst the Oceanic races in general. Members of the same tipu or clan cannot marry." (Page 74.)

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

with high and noble peaks. These shut the Nāyar country entirely out of the rest of India and have helped to a very great extent to preserve the peculiar customs of marriage and relationships of Malabar. The monsoon which these Ghats receive makes Malabar the most picturesque part of India, an ever green country with lofty trees, luxuriant vegetation, noble rivers and magnificent lakes. There is nowhere a place which so much approximates to the description of

> "Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
> Breadths of tropic shade and cluster knots of paradise;
> Droops the heavy blossomed bower, hangs the heavy fruited tree,
> Summer isles of Eden lying in the purple sphere of sea."

The extreme fertility of the valley and the rich tropical luxuriance of the forest have made life extremely easy, which even the importation of machines, mills, and factories has not been able entirely to change. Malabar is to a great extent, therefore, a land of idleness, and I may say of intellectual culture, for nowhere is learning, art, and poetry so much esteemed as among the Nampudiris and Nāyars of Malabar.

There are various reasons to believe that the Nāyars were very early comers in this place.[1] That they were not the aboriginal inhabitants of the place is evident from the fact that all over Malabar, from Mangalore to Cape Camorin, Nāyar families possess agricultural serfs who are distinctly of the negroid type. The Nāyars are a Dravidian race whose culture has only been superficially influenced by the Aryan immigration; of this more later.

The other communities of Malabar among whom the Nāyars live, are the Nampudiris, the Tiyas and the Pulayas. The Nampudiris are Brahmin landlords whose intercourse with and influence on the Nāyars we shall have to consider in detail later. A few families of Kshatriyas form the petty royalty of Malabar. The Tiyas are toddy drawers, people who are free men in theory but still show traces of serfdom in their relation with Nāyars, living as their tenants and doing their work for them. And the Pulayas, who till lately were slaves on whom was built up the agricultural life of the country. There are innumerable minor tribes, but they are small communities differentiated on the basis of their profession, like the Kanyans (astrologers), Asaris (carpenters), etc.

In this order Nāyars come next to the Brahmins and Kshatriyas and have precedence over all other castes. They are considered generally as a Dravidian variety of the Aryan Kshatriyas, which is, however, absolutely spurious in theory and is true only in so far as their *de facto* position is concerned. Any way, they form the feudal aristocracy of Malabar. Burke on a famous occasion classed them with

[1] See note at the end of the essay, on "The Origin of the Word Nāyars," Appendix. Note 1.

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll Nayar

the fourth day this mock marriage is dissolved by cutting to pieces the cloth which was given to them the first day.

The *Kalyanam* days are the gayest in the family, and when it is over women keep on saying, "Ah, it takes another twelve years for this to come."

What is the significance of this custom? It must be said to start with that it has no significance in these days. At least, for the last seventy-five years it has been merely a meaningless ceremony, a survival of a peculiar system of marriage. The tendency in these days has been to abolish it, though the movement to do so has not gained much influence, except in the higher families.

The significance of this custom in ancient days seems to have been this. It is necessary to say that a system of sexual relationship, the laxity of which made it in many cases indistinguishable from promiscuity, seems to have been prevalent among the Nāyars, even as late as the eighteenth century. The literature of the time abounds in allusions as to how fickle ladies jilted their husbands and married others. A child was supposed to be legitimate as long as a man was willing to meet the expenses of child delivery, and that phrase still survives as a form of reproach against a father who does not treat his son well. A chorus of foreign, as well as Indian, evidence, however, proves that sexual relations in the higher families were of a more or less permanent character, and were generally monogamous.

The *Talikettu* ceremony was, under these conditions, the actual and religious marriage. After that custom the girl was allowed to choose her own suitor, and when such a suitor, who was her husband, dies, she does not mourn his death, or become a widow, while, when the man who actually tied the *Tali* dies she undergoes certain formalities of mourning. Also the man who tied the *Tali*, though he never sees the girl again, is called "little father" by all the members of the family. All these go to prove that the actual marriage ceremony was the *Talikettu*. It must be remembered that *Tali* (an ornament round the neck) is a symbol of marriage for all Hindus, and among Brahmins all over India the *Tali* round the neck is only broken when the husband dies. If this, then, was the real marriage, what was the actual position occupied by the priest or warrior who tied the *Tali*? The fact that he is conducted to the house after the ceremony seems to point to at least a latent conjugal right. It is quite conceivable that in the days of child marriage this ceremony implied perhaps more than a theoretical right, though, during at least the last hundred years, nothing more than the form has been observed. In this connection it is well to remember a like ceremony performed with great festivities among the *Deva-Dasis* or the "Temple-girls" in other parts of India. They also have a form of marriage which lasts for four days. On each day the girl puts on the dress of the women of different communities, and sits in a big hall, where are gathered together all the women of her local community. This ceremony, it seems, must precede before the girl devotes her life to "temple service." Since the Nāyar women, in olden days, do not seem to have had any settled form of marriage, and were free to

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589 182 194 cast off one husband and choose another, the religious rites of marriage had to be performed without any definite marital relationship with any particular man. This seems to be the explanation of *Talikettu Kalyanam*.

582 564 585 The real marriage *de jure* and *de facto* is the *Sambandham*. "*Sambandham*" is a Sanskrit word, meaning good and close union. A Nāyar girl can have *Sambandham* not only with a Nāyar man, but with Brahmins and Kshatriyas. As a matter of fact the whole system of Nāyar customs seems to have been regulated to suit the purpose of the Nampudiri Brahmins. It must be remembered that a very strict system of primogeniture is prevalent among the Nampudiris, and only the eldest male member in a Nampudiri family marries from among his own caste. Only in case the eldest has no issue, or is incapable of having any, is it that one of his brothers gets the chance to marry in his own community. Generally, therefore, the younger [554] sons of a Nampudiri family marry among the Nāyars. It must also be remembered that it is considered an honour reserved only for the highest Nāyar families to be allied to Nampudiri families by marriage.

585 The *Sambandham* customs are of the simplest nature. If the suitor is a Brahmin he goes and tells the *Kārnavan* of his desire to marry the girl. The *Kārnavan* then consults the astrologer for an auspicious date, and informs the village elders. The Brahmin brings some *Pudakas* (*i.e.*, clothes which the wife wears) and hands them over to the girl in the presence of her relations and the neighbours, and it is duly announced that they are married.

[582] If the suitor is a Nāyar he is generally the girl's father's sister's son. As we have said before, this is considered to be the most proper marriage. In this case it must be remembered the head of the suitor's family approaches the girl's uncle with a proposal that such marriage is eminently desirable, and the *Kārnavan* informs all the necessary people, and the *Pudaka* is given without much ceremony. It is when a stranger wants to marry in the family that all the formalities have to be gone through. Then all the village and all people in any way related are informed and, in the case of rich families, invited to a feast on the auspicious day. After an elaborate and sumptuous meal the village headman and family elders assemble in a hall. A lighted lamp is placed in the middle, and before it a plantain leaf with rice, betel-nut, lemons and spices. The bridegroom is ushered in here nearly half an hour before the ceremony, and he comes accompanied by some members of his family and the chief men of his village. There is a sort of social reunion for some time, and when the auspicious moment arrives, the bride, accompanied either by her mother (or, in some parts, by her mother's brother's wife) enters and approaches the bridegroom. In ordinary cases the bridegroom stands up and takes the clothes which some of his party had brought for him and gives them to the bride. In some cases the uncle of the bridegroom gives them to the mother of the girl.

The ceremony is now supposed to be over. The bride retires with her mother, and for some time a general conversazione, including sometimes recitals of odes,

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the last fifty years. All the evidence that we have of this custom among the Nāyars in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, are from foreign travellers who, it must be remembered, were not allowed to come within sixty yards of a Nāyar house. Their evidence, therefore, is an extremely unsatisfactory ground for dogmatising on Nāyar customs. On the other hand, the extensive Malayalam literature of that period contains no single allusion to polyandry. The works of Kunchan Nambiar, whom it is no exaggeration whatever to compare to Molière, though he describes minutely the social life of the Nāyars of the early eighteenth century with its laxity of morals, redeemed only by chivalry of conduct, makes no mention whatever of polyandry. On the other hand, in a famous passage he makes the declaration: "It is against the laws of all castes for a woman to have four or five husbands."

Nalanchu barthavoru thikku thanatu
Nalu jatikkum Viddhichatallorkanam.

How far this statement is decisive it is difficult to say. But one thing seems to be clear from it, that the idea in itself was repugnant to the community as a whole, though individuals might have practised it here and there.[1]

V.—Birth and Funeral Ceremonies.

Among the Nāyars, as among all the people whose life is regulated by magico-religious customs, child-birth is an event of great and mysterious significance. Especially is this the case with regard to the first child. Therefore the ceremonies of nativity are of an intenser and more magical character during the time of the first pregnancy than during subsequent ones. Indeed, the mysterious nature of childbearing is entirely lost after the first time, and the ceremonies on subsequent occasions are only a few tabus, which are generally, in the phraseology of Van Genepp, "rites dynamistes directs et negatives."

The most important of the pre-natal ceremonies is *Pulicudi*,[2] or the drinking of the tamarind juice; and the customs relating it are as follows: On the appointed day all the *enangars* (people belonging to the same kingship organization) come to the house early in the morning, and the pregnant woman is taken out by one of them and bathed, after rubbing oil all over her. Then she is dressed for the occasion and, entering the house from the north, sits looking eastward. The astrologer, who being of a lower caste commonly stands in the outer courtyard, calculates the auspicious hour. He sends word when the time is come, and the *Ammāvi* (the wife of the mother's brother, and mother-in-law by right of the brother) pours a few drops of tamarind juice in a small silver bowl. The brother or the uncle of the

[1] See Note 3, Appendix.

[2] Dr. Rivers makes some obviously erroneous deductions based upon this word, for which see note on "The Similarities between Nāyars and the Todas," Appendix, Note 2.

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is from the Sanskrit work *Nayaka*, meaning leader. As such a derivation flatters the national vanity of the community it has been accepted without question. The utter absurdity of the idea that the people who call themselves Aryans (as the Brahmins of Malabar still do) and look down upon the rest from a point of view of racial superiority, can have given them this proud title, never seems to have suggested itself. Moreover, the Aryan settlers of Malabar asserted a spiritual as well as temporal superiority over the Nāyars, which goes far to disprove the theory of the derivation of the word from *Nayaka*, or Lord.

It seems unquestionable, on the other hand, that the word *Nāyar* is the same as *Nagar*. As the totem names seem to have been imposed on the community from outside it seems reasonable to suppose that this serpent-worshipping people were called by their neighbours *Nagar* or serpent-men. That the Nāyars in ancient days were a totemic clan, is easy to see from the fact that every Nāyar family still holds the serpent sacred. Thus it will not cut down a *Kavu*, or serpent grove, as it is the place where the family serpents reside. It is, of course, natural that in a community of 3½ million souls the same solidarity of totemic feeling, as it exists, say, among the turtle clan, cannot have existed.

M. S. Reinach, in defining totemism as distinct from fetishism, says that the totem is a class of objects regarded by a tribe or clan as tutelary or protective in the widest sense of the word. Take the case of a clan with a serpent totem; the members will call themselves serpents, claim descent from a serpent, abstain from killing serpents, etc. Not only do the Nāyars still show traces of having done all this, but they continue to perform with undiminished zeal *Nagathān* (*thān* is an honorific suffix) *pattus*, or prayers and songs, to the sacred serpents. When anything goes wrong the astrologer generally finds something done to offend the sacred serpents. There is one singular case where a man, without heeding the warnings of all his people, went and cleared a serpent grove, and the result was that he died six days later. In popular opinion, this was without doubt due to the wrath of the serpents.

From all this it seems quite clear that before the Aryan invasion the Nāyars were a community with a *Naga* or serpent totem. This is supported by evidence from Ceylon also. Ceylon chronicles mention that when the Buddha visited the island for the second time (second century B.C.) he found the northern part peopled by Nagas who were fighting with the Yakshas, or the original inhabitants of the land.[1] This is without doubt an emigration of S. Indian people to Ceylon, probably as a result of Aryan pressure from the North. The descendants of these Nagas of Ceylon, it must be noticed, bear a close similarity to the Nāyars in matters of social life. Among their customs may be specially noticed: (*a*) the elasticity or rather the slenderness of the marriage tie which permits the discarding, without any disgrace attached to it, of undesirable husbands or wives; (*b*) the remarriage of such widows

[1] See Parker, *Ancient Ceylon*. London, 1909, p. 16.

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and wives with others as a universal national custom; (c) the absence of "*Sati*."[1]

In view of the fact that the Veddas are a strictly monogamous people, the prevalence of this custom in Ceylon can only be attributed to South Indian influence. Existing as it does in almost physical contiguity, it is indubitable that these customs and the Nāyar customs had the same origin. In fact, a Naga community was spread over the whole of South India, and the pressure of Aryan emigration seems gradually to have driven them behind the western Ghats in the case of the Nāyars and beyond the straits in the case of their kindred in Ceylon.

The Laws of Philology also support this view. I am assured by Don de Z. Wickerma Singhe that the change from "ɑ" to "ʏ" (as from Naɣar to Nayar) is very commonly met with in Dravidian and Prakistic languages. Apart from the general consonance of this change to the philological rules, Mr. Wickerma Singhe also pointed out to me that in Sinhalese[2] the Sanskrit word *Nāga* is written and pronounced as *Naya*.

The word *Nāyar*, therefore, is, without a shadow of doubt, the same as the word *Nāgar*, which means serpent-men.

Note 2.—The Nāyars and the Todas.

Dr. Rivers, in his learned and elaborate study of the social conditions of the Todas, makes some interesting comparisons with regard to their customs and some of the survivals in Nāyar social life. Before venturing to criticise some of his deductions I may be allowed to state that his idea of the emigration of the Todas to their present country from Malabar is probably right, though the evidence that he has adduced does not in any way prove it. The following facts which he has not noticed may give some additional weight to this hypothesis. Among the Nāyars the dairy (*Pal-pura*) is considered a thing to be kept *ceremonially pure*. No unclean person may approach it, and even the pollution of a child-birth is considered to be sufficiently strong to preclude those whom it affects from touching things belonging to the *Pal-pura*. It would be an exaggeration to say that the *Pal-pura* is considered sacred, but it is certainly *purer* than any other part of the house. Also the way in which the Todas convert milk into butter-milk is exactly the same as among the Nāyars. These customs with regard to the dairy are prevalent, not only where there is geographical contiguity between the Nāyar-land and the Toda-land, but also in Middle Travancore, which is at least two hundred and fifty miles from the land of the Todas.

Some, however, of the arguments brought forward by Dr. Rivers would not bear critical investigation. For example, he says[3]: "More important is the custom of

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] Cf. Wm. Greiger, *Sinhalese Etymology.*
[3] Pp. 609–70.

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114 585 giving a cloth as the essential marriage ceremony . . . Throughout the greater part of the Malabar coast the essential feature of the marriage ceremony is that the man gives a piece of cloth to the woman. The ceremony of the *Sambandham* marriage (among the Nairs) consists in giving a cloth, and various names such as *Muntu Kodukkuka*, *Vastadanum poduvakota*, and *Putamuri* all mean cloth-giving."[1]

114 585 174 171 Now with regard to this "essential feature" of the Nāyar *Sambandham*, it may be useful to remember that cloth-giving as a name for marriage did not exist in the earlier half of the eighteenth century. The poet Kunchan Nampiyar, in his works (thirty-two of which are directly or indirectly descriptive of Nāyar life) uses the word "cloth-giving" for *Sambandham* only once:

> "*Pennine Puteu Kotuththennullathumunnikkittan Potti paranju*"
> "*Patrachaictam.*"

[195] This "essential feature," therefore, is most certainly a development of the later half of the eighteenth century. It is, as a matter of fact, only within the last fifty years that cloth-giving as a synonym for marriage has come to be used widely, and even now it is used mostly by the ultra-refined, who consider it improper to utter the name of marriage in company. Therefore, to say that the Todas emigrated from the Malabar coast because of similality in custom which, among the Nāyars at least, is a very late development, does not carry conviction.

114 192 171 174 Again, Dr. Rivers sees a "possible link" between Malabar and the Todas in the word *Pul-palu*[2] of the Todas and the ceremony of *Puli Kudi* of the Nāyars. Because of the similarity in these words, Dr. Rivers has suggested[3] "the name *Pulipal* may mean tamarind dairy and be a survival of community between the Toda ceremony and that of Malabar." This is a supreme example of the danger of drawing conclusions from questionable etymological premises. Now *Puli* is a well-known Dravidian word which means both the tamarind tree and the sour taste. It is also used as a verb, in which case it means to make anything sour. Now *pul-pali* does not mean tamarind dairy, but the dairy of sour milk. How this could be a link "between Malabar and the Todas" it is utterly impossible for me to see.

114 Dr. Rivers has enumerated a number of points in which he sees "a close resemblance between the customs of the peoples of Malabar and the customs of the Todas." But I would submit that all his points in which any similarity could be seen are Dravidian customs belonging not only to the peoples of Malabar but to the rest of the non-Aryan peoples of South India. Therefore the arguments Dr. Rivers has brought forward prove only that the Todas are a Dravidian people. They do not prove that there was any connection, other than that of neighbours, between the Nāyars and the Todas.

[1] Except the last, which means cloth-cutting.
[2] Pp. 701–2.
[3] P. 702.

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[173] Origin and tradition of the caste.

According to *Kerala Mahatmyam*, the Nayars are said to be the descendants of the union of the junior members of the Nambuthiri families with the Devagandarva and Rakshasa women brought in by Parasurama from extra-terrestrial regions. The *Keralotpatti* regards them as the descendants of the Sudras who accompanied the Brahman immigrants from outside Kerala.

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Some consider that the Nayars came from Tibet where polyandry prevails, while others consider them to be a very early division of the Newars of Nepal. The mere existence of polyandry in Tibet is not sufficient to suggest a racial identity, nor is the form of polyandry prevailing amongst the Nayars the same as that found amongst the Tibetans; [1] but the marital relations, mode of inheritance and other customs, as well as the style of architecture of Nepal, closely connect them with the Nayars, and go to show a common origin. [2]

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In the serpent worship of the Nayars, and also their matriarchal customs, others have found traces of a Scythian origin. It is said that the Dravidian languages retain a more intimate connection with the Scythian or Turanean tongues. Philology also comes in to support this view. It is said that Tamil and its cognate tongues were founded upon the ancient Asura or Dravidian speech, and this is strongly confirmed by the fact that the language of the Brahuis, a tribe on the borders of Sind, has been found to be closely allied to them. "The Brahuis' language", says Dr. Caldwell, "enables us to trace the Dravidian race to the southern confines of Central Asia, and that this country was the home of the Nagas to which race apparently belonged the founders of the Dravidian kingdoms." It may therefore be safely concluded that the Dravidians of South India were of the same stock as the Nagas of the North, and to these tribes of Naga colonists belonged the original serpent worshipping Nayars.[3] "The name Dravidian Races," says Friedrich Ratzel, "fits only the Tamils, Telugus, and Canarese of Southern India, remoter kindred of the dark aboriginal population to whom Aryan population brought the religion of Brahma, a high civil order and of course the opportunity of extensive intermixture. The selection of the term is connected

1. The Evolution of Marriage, Letourneau, page 80.
2. The Sun and the Serpent, C. F. Oldham, page 158.
3. The Sun and the Serpent, Chapter VII, pages 162–165.

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with its use in the sacred writings of the old Indians, where it is applied to the old Kshatriyas on the east coast of the Deccan who had fallen to the rank of Sudras. As a rule, however, all are called Dravidians who are not Aryan or Semitic and speak agglutinative languages like Tamil. They are distinguished by their dark colour, Mongolian features, and smooth hair. "The nucleus of the Tamil race was indeed," says Grant, "devoted to the nomad life, the fundamental institution of Turanean existence, but the hypothesis of their close connection with the population of Tibet has not attained the rank of scientific certainty." [1]

The passage, quoted above, supports the general consensus of opinion, that the Malayalam language is an offshoot of Tamil, and that the Nayars are the immigrants from the Tamil country.

It has always been a matter of controversy whether Malayalam is the mother, sister, or daughter of Tamil. The popular opinion seems to be, that it is the archaic form of Tamil before it became a written language, and this corresponds with the information derived from the Greek writers that the country was known by the name of Limurike, Tamilike or Tamil country. [2]

Relying mainly on literary evidence, Mr. Kanakasabha Pillay has attributed a Mongolian origin to the whole Dravidian race of Tamils, among whom he includes the Nayars, but anthropometric results point otherwise. [3]

As has been seen, many distinguished authorities are unanimously agreed that the Nayars belong to the Dravidian race with no doubt a considerable admixture of Aryan blood, but the date of their arrival in Malabar cannot be accurately determined.

It is assumed by some writers that the Aryans were conquerors who reduced *Asuras* (Dravidians) to slavery. Whatever might have been the fate of the aborigines, the *Asuras* were not subdued by the Aryans, and never became their serfs or dependants, but were converted gradually to Aryan usages by a regular fusion. Bishop Caldwell supports this view and says, that the subjugation of the Dravidians by the Aryans is

1. Races of Mankind, Vol. III, page 359.
2. Malabar Law and Custom, Introduction, page 2.
3. The Tamils, eighteen hundred years ago.

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174 not borne out either by any Sanskrit authority or Dravidian traditions; [1] but certain legends refer to conflicts between them and the Hindu colonists of later times, and these are said to have been led by Parasurama, and the Nagas from Pātāla whom they found in possession of the country. [2] The latter were not forced to divide the spoil with the Kshatriyas or warriors who elsewhere counterbalanced the power of the Brahmans, and obliged them to keep up a continual struggle in which victory alternated with defeat. These internecine dissensions gave the indigenous element a chance to recover itself by degrees, and finally gave birth to a military aristocracy called the Nayars. [3]

701 The Nayars of ancient times formed the chief militia in Cochin, Malabar and Travancore, and their valour and other fighting qualities evoked the admiration of foreigners, and inspired even the restless Portuguese poet Cameons, who described them in the following apt lines:—

The military character of the Nayars.

> Poliar the labouring clans were named;
> By the proud Nayars the noble rank is claimed;
> The toils of culture and of art they scorn:
> The shining faulchion brandished in the right;
> Their left arm wields the target in the fight.

175 701 One of the earliest accounts of the Nayars is found in the writings of Duarte Barbosa, who described them as men of noble descent, who had to be armed as knights by the king or lord with whom they lived, and who could not call themselves Nayars until they had been so equipped as to bear arms. They were generally sent to school at the age of seven to learn all [868] manner of athletic feats and to enable them to use their [447] weapons. [4] Their sinews and joints were so stretched and anointed with the *oyle seamus* by skillful fellows called "Panicars," who were captains in war, that they became very light and nimble; and could "wind and twine their bodies" as if they had no bones. They cast themselves backwards and forwards, high and low, to the astonishment of the beholders, and the delight in their weapon was so great that they

1. Grammar of the Dravidian Languages, Introduction, page 107.
2. The Sun and the Serpent, page 107.
3. Primitive Folk, page 107.
4. A description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar by Duarte Barbosa, page 128—129.

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Internal structure of the caste.

Caste assigns to each individual his profession or calling; and when once the system is handed down from father to son, and from generation to generation, it is found impossible for any person or his descendants to change for any other the condition of life which the law assigns to him. The most far-sighted and prudent men in ancient times probably found such an institution to be the only means for maintaining a system of civilisation amongst a people endowed with the peculiar characteristics of the Hindus.

The important principle which guided all ancient legislators was, that no man in the commonwealth should be left without work. At the same time, they knew that the people were indolent by nature. They were further aware of the fact that, unless every individual was duly provided with some work, for which he might be best fited, the social fabric must necessarily fall to pieces. The law-givers therefore established durable and inviolable rules for the different castes constituting the Hindu race; the violation of which brings divine displeasure, and meets with severe punishment both in this world and in the world to come.

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It is some such guiding principle that is involved in the division of the Nayars into various sub-castes. In Kerala the Brahmans seem to have been instrumental in the formation of castes to some extent; for, it is found that some castes have to do services in temples to Brahmans. Distinct professional groups in the tribal organisations may have existed there before the advent of these people, who probably found it easy to make a ready adjustment of the social groups, and thought it advisable to assign to them well defined occupations. Therefore, the original institution of the caste system does not merit any serious condemnation.

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Some are of opinion that it is not quite correct to say that the Nayars are a caste, and that it would be better to call them a tribe, as Bhattacharya has done in his 'Castes and Sects'. I am however inclined to think that the name is not quite appropriate, and that they do form a caste of people, known as Malayali Sudras.

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In regard to subdivisions, there is no uniformity. So numerous and varied are they in Cochin, Malabar, and Travancore, that titles of distinction that have been conferred upon

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kalyánam of the Nayars and the marriage ceremony among other Hindus. All available evidence unmistakably points to the conclusion that the former is, in intention, if not in effect, the actual marriage ceremony of the Hindus. The ceremonials in the two cases differ very little; there is, however, one exception, namely, that in the case of Brahmans and others, vedic *mantrams* are recited, while the Nayars are compelled to substitute Brahmani *páttu* (song), which should be uttered in the *Rig védic swaram*. Ever since the institution of this system of marriage in Kerala, these songs have been in existence, and they invoke the blessings of numerous children for the pair. It must also be noted that, among all Brahmans, the wedding ceremony is divided into two parts, namely, the first in which the ceremonials form the chief feature, known as betrothal, and the second, popularly known as consummation or the real marriage. In the case of Nayars and other *marumakkathâyam* Hindus, the *táli* tying ceremony for a girl, which is performed before the first sign of menstruation, refers to the betrothal, and the *sambandham* to the real marriage. There is this important difference that, while the Brahmans perform the ceremony after the selection of a husband and postpone the union of the couple to a future date, the *marumakkathâyam* people perform the ceremony first and select the husband on the second occasion, *i. e.*, when the girl is fit to be united to her husband. Hence the bridegroom in the first ceremony acts the part of a vicarious husband. But when the husband is ready at hand, it is not unusual for the girl to be actually married on the occasion of *táli* tying. The reason for this departure may have been due to the scarcity of suitable young men in the old troublous times and the consequent difficulty of securing a proper husband for every girl before puberty and the danger of girls being out-casted in default of it. Hence it is that the early legislators have devised this convenient plan to allow every girl to be married in a sense with the necessary religious ceremony, and enable her to remain unmarried for life without being subject to excommunication from caste. This view is supported by the fact, that the Nayars were, till towards the close of the eighteenth century, a fighting race and that there was a great loss of lives in the wars with neighbouring principalities and tribes. As in other matters the letter of the law has been closely followed, without a corresponding adherence to its spirit.

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595 564 [184] responsibility to support their wives and children from their family property. Whether it was introduced by the Nambuthiris, it is difficult to believe; and it is to be noted, that it was prevailing to a considerable extent in North Malabar, among whom and other low castes their influence was less than in South Malabar and the Cochin State.

83 564 The *Smriti*[1] says, "the Sudras' appointed path to Heaven is serving the Brahmans". "The practice of Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, having sexual intercourse with the servile women is in accordance with the *sástrás*. If a Brahman wish to have sexual intercourse with a Sudra wife, the Sudra is bound to gratify the wish. A Sudra cannot be sure of the true parentage of his children". Again, before the Malabar Marriage Commission, the Zamorin Maharaja Bahadur, Ettan Thampuran Avergal, a learned Sanskrit scholar, Kolattúr Váriar and other respectable witnesses unanimously deposed, that, in Kerala, a non-Brahman or *marumakkathâyam* woman need not be chaste, and she is not forbidden to consort with more than one [178] man. To such teachings of the learned and influential leaders of the orthodox community, the Nayars of these days will no longer submit.

595 701 Another important theory connects the practice with the military organisation of the Nayar community. Montaigue was evidently of opinion, that it was introduced, because the Nayar leaders looked upon an army of bachelors as the most effective instrument in war.[2] The subjection of the males of [835] a whole race from the earliest youth to the decline of manhood must therefore have been the cause of the fugitive connection and promiscuous intercourse.

174 595 European writers, such as Baron Avebury, Meyr, Mc. Linan, and others, have arrived at the conclusion, that the system of inheritance now prevalent among the Nayars must have originated from a type of polyandry resembling free love. In [591] ancient times, the rule was that the wife should remain in [592] her own house and be visited by her husband, and that the eldest female was at the head of the house, which was afterwards transferred to the eldest male. The part of man in the [842] function of generation passed as of secondary importance or as

1. Malabar Marriage Commission Report, page 17.
2. Essays of Michael Montaigne,

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impossible to determine. It was under the influence of the tangible fact of maternity, that the notions of race, family and inheritance were elaborated and developed. Against this is the fact, that the jungle tribes and very low castes have a regular system of marriage and a kind of paternal inheritance.

Sir Henry Mayne maintains that the origin of society in patriarchal lines, is that polyandry and kinship through females are of temporary duration, liable to be brought about at any stage in the progress of society by peculiar circumstances under which it may be placed. If this were true, the popular belief that Nambuthiris brought it about to accommodate their domestic habits is easily proved.

Letourneau says that there is no warrant to consider this form of conjugal union as having been general, but that it is in exceptional form brought about by necessity in a good number of gross societies. This view to some extent is shared by Herbert Spencer who says that polyandry is one form of marital relations or arrangements independently originating in the earliest societies by successive limitations of promiscuity. Lastly, the opinion is unanimous that the Nayars and other *marumakkathâyis* are Dravidians and that polyandry and its accompanying incidents prevailed in Southern India among the non-Aryan tribes. There is strong reason to think, that the *tâli* tying ceremony, the prohibition of sexual union outside the caste, and the doctrine of *Anulomam* and *Pathilomam* were orginally introduced by Nambuthiri Brahmans as restrictions on promiscuities. Thus, so different are the views of anthropologists on this subject, that it still remains an unsettled problem in the ethnology of Kerala. As has been already said, the custom of polyandry is dead. The women of the upper and middle classes are monogamous, and marriage in practice amply satisfies the definition of Lord Penzance in Hyde v. Hyde, namely, "the voluntary union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all other".

595

Polygamy.

There is nothing which prevents a man from entering into conjugal relations with more than one woman at a time; nevertheless, it is seldom practised. Indeed, when a man feels happy and contented with his own wife, very seldom has he any inclination to form *sambandham* with another for the sake of novelty unless forced by the

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
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173-796 184 objects, such as recovery from illness, success in litigation, birth of children, etc.

[782] When the information of the crossing of the Walayar by the chief of Kongu was communicated to the people of the four *desams* by the Izhuvans, they repaired to the temple in excitement and consternation, when Lo! the temple gates opened of themselves and a beautiful female form dressed in full battle armour, brandishing a shining sword and shedding a resplendent divine light, suddenly emerged out of the image within and marched off direct to meet the advancing army of the Kongan, followed by all the brave men among the people. The battle was fought with the result already mentioned. This battle is enacted on the night of the Kongapada festival as one of its essential functions, accompanied by the beating of numerous Pariah drums, blowing of horns, racing of horses, torch-light processions, besides, of course, the usual mischief-making among the youngsters, but the elders generally control them and stop excesses. In the course of the sham fight, some act as the wounded, some even as the dead and fall down on the field of action. These dead and wounded are immediately taken up and carried by the youngsters to their supposed respective houses in the town accompanied with torch-lights, beating of drums, beating of breasts, and crying and weeping. No outsider is allowed to take part in this sacred function. If an outsider, being possessed with any sudden fit of enthusiasm, attempts to take part in this function, 'woe be to him.' This battle function takes place at about 10 o'clock in the night and lasts for two or three hours. At the end of it, the night procession of the festival begins from the battle-field and moves through the Nayar quarters to the temple, where it reaches just before day-break, when there is a display of fireworks. After day-break, the chief of the place or *Náduvázhi* represented by the Chambath house, accompanied by the people, go to the Goddess' temple to offer prayers of love and gratitude to the Bhagavati. The festival is wound up by a performance on the following night called '*Devendra pallu*' in which all the "one hundred Nayars"[1] of Chittur are

[796 184]

[101] [174]

1. The Nayar community of Chittur is collectively called by the name of "Chittur Nooru Nayar." It shows that the original village organisation of Chittur consisted of one hundred Nayar houses or families. Although there is a considerable increase in the number of Nayar houses at present, the appellation 'Nooru Nayar' is still used.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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snake-bite, the Nāyādis wear a brass toe-ring. And, when engaged in catching rats in their holes, they wear round the wrist a snake-shaped metal ring, to render them safe against snakes which may be concealed in the hole.

The Nāyādis who live within the jurisdiction of the Kavalapāra Nāyar near Shoranūr wear the kuḍumi (front lock of hair), as there are no Māppillas (Muhammadans) to molest them. The Kavalapara Nāyar was at one time an important chief, and directed all Nambutiri jenmis (landlords) who held land within his jurisdiction to bind themselves not to let the land to Māppillas. Nāyādis of other parts are not allowed by the Māppillas to wear the kuḍumi, and, if they do so, they are taken for Parayans and professional sorcerers, and beaten.

Some Nāyādis have become converts to Christianity, others to Muhammadanism, and maintain themselves by begging for alms from Muhammadans. They are called Thoppyitta (cap-wearing) Nāyādis.

The priest of the Nāyādis is called Mūppan. His appointment is hereditary, and he enquires into all matters affecting the community, and can excommunicate a guilty person.*

Average height, 155 cm.; nasal index, 86.

Nāyar.—"The Nāyars," Mr. H. A. Stuart writes,† "are a Dravidian caste, or rather a community, for we find several distinct elements with totally different occupations among the people who call themselves by this title. The original Nāyars were undoubtedly a military body, holding lands and serving as a militia, but the present Nāyar caste includes persons who, by hereditary

* This note is based mainly on articles by Mr. S. Appadorai Aiyar and Mr. L. K. Ananth Krishna Aiyar.

† Madras Census Report, 1891.

101 occupation, are traders, artisans, oilmongers, palanquin-
174 bearers, and even barbers and washermen. The fact
564 seems to be that successive waves of immigration brought
[701] from the Canarese and Tamil countries different castes
[463] and different tribes; and these, settling down in the country, adopted the customs and manners, and assumed the caste names of the more respectable of the community that surrounded them. This process of assimilation
101 564 is going on even yet. Chettis of Coimbatore, for example, who settled in Palghāt and Valluvanād within living memory, have developed by this time into
[55] Nāyars. In the census schedules we find instances in which the males of a house affix the term Nāyar to their names, while the names of the females end in Chettichi. Gollas entering the country from the north have similarly, in course of time, assumed Nāyar customs and manners,
643 564 and are now styled Nāyars. Again the rājahs and chieftains of the country sometimes raised individuals or classes who had rendered them meritorious service to the rank of Nāyars. These men were thereafter styled Nāyars, but formed a separate sub-division with little or no communion with the rest of the Nāyar class, until at least, after the lapse of generations, when their origin was forgotten. Nāyar may thus at present be considered to be a term almost as wide and general as Sūdra."

173 564 According to the Brāhman tradition, the Nāyar caste is the result of union between the Nambūdris with Dēva, Gandharva and Rakshasa women introduced by Parasurāma; and this tradition embodies the undoubted fact that the caste by its practice of hypergamy has had a very large infusion of Aryan blood. In origin the Nāyars were probably a race of Dravidian immigrants, who were amongst the first invaders of Malabar, and as conquerors assumed the position of the governing and

13: Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date)
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to murder him, which is looked upon as a very innocent action, and for which no complaint is ever made. It is true that the pariahs have one day in the year when all the Nairs they can touch become their slaves, but the Nairs take such precautions to keep out of the way at the time, that an accident of that kind seldom happens." It is further recorded by Buchanan * that "the whole of these Nairs formed the militia of Malayala, directed by the Namburis and governed by the Rajahs. Their chief delight is in arms, but they are more inclined to use them for assassination or surprise, than in the open field. Their submission to their superiors was great, but they exacted deference from those under them with a cruelty and arrogance, rarely practised but among Hindus in their state of independence. A Nair was expected to instantly cut down a Tiar or Mucuai, who presumed to defile him by touching his person; and a similar fate awaited a slave, who did not turn out of the road as a Nair passed."

Nāyar is commonly said to be derived from the Sanskrit Nāyaka, a leader, and to be cognate with Naik, and Nayudu or Naidu. In this connection, Mr. L. Moore † writes that "if a reference is made to the Anglo-Indian Glossary (Hobson-Jobson) by Yule and Burnell, it will be found that the term Naik or Nayakan, and the word Nayar are derived from the same Sanskrit original, and there is a considerable amount of evidence to show that the Nayars of Malabar are closely connected by origin with the Nayakans of Vijayanagar. ‡ Xavier, writing in 1542 to 1544, makes frequent references to men whom he calls Badages, who are said to have been

* Journey through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, 1807.

† Malabar Law and Custom, 3rd ed., 1905.

‡ *Vide* R. Sewell. A Forgotten Empire (Vijayanagar), 1900.

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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101 174 collectors of royal taxes, and to have grievously oppressed Xavier's converts among the fishermen of Travancore.* Dr. Caldwell, alluding to Xavier's letters, says † that these Badages were no doubt Vadages or men from the North, and is of opinion that a Jesuit writer of the time who called them Nayars was mistaken, and that they were really Nayakans from Madura. I believe, however, that the Jesuit rightly called them Nayars, for I find that Father Organtino, writing in 1568, speaks of these Badages as people from Narasinga (a kingdom north of Madura, lying close to Bishnaghur).‡ Bishnaghur is, of course, Vijayanagar, and the kingdom of Narasinga was the name frequently given by the Portuguese to Vijayanagar. Almost every page of Mr. Sewell's interesting book on Vijayanagar bears testimony to the close connection between Vijayanagar and the West Coast. Dr. A. C. Burnell tells us that the kings who ruled Vijayanagar during the latter half of the fourteenth century belonged to a low non-Aryan caste, namely, that of Canarese cow-herds.§ They were therefore closely akin to the Nayars, one of the leading Rajas among whom at the present time, although officially described as a Samanta, is in reality of the Eradi, *i.e.*, cow-herd caste.‖ It is remarkable that Colonel (afterwards Sir Thomas) Munro, in the memorandum written by him in 1802 ¶ on the Poligars of the Ceded Districts,

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* Father Coleridge's Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier.

† History of Tinnevelly. ‡ Coleridge's Xavier.

§ Burnell. Translation of the Daya Vibhaga, Introduction. *Vide* also Elements of South Indian Palæography (2nd ed., p. 109), where Dr Burnell says that it is certain that the Vijayanagar kings were men of low caste.

‖ *Vide* Glossary, Report of the Malabar Marriage Commission, p. 2, and Day's Land of the Permauls, p. 44

¶ Fifth Report of the Committee on the affairs of the East India Company, II, 499, 530. Reprint by Higginbotham, Madras.

13. Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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when dealing with the cases of a number of Poligars who were direct descendants of men who had been chiefs under the kings of Vijayanagar, calls them throughout his report Naique or Nair, using the two names as if they were identical. Further investigation as to the connection of the Nayars of Malabar with the kingdom of Vijayanagar would, I believe, lead to interesting results." In the Journal of the Hon. John Lindsay (1783) it is recorded * that "we received information that our arms were still successful on the Malabar coast, and that our army was now advancing into the inland country; whilst the Nayars and Polygars that occupy the jungles and mountains near Seringapatam, thinking this a favourable opportunity to regain their former independence, destroyed the open country, and committed as many acts of barbarity as Hyder's army had done in the Carnatic."

"Some," Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes in a note on the Nāyars of Travancore, "believe that Nāyar is derived from Nāga (serpents), as the Aryans so termed the earlier settlers of Malabar on account of the special adoration which they paid to snakes. The Travancore Nāyars are popularly known as Malayāla Sūdras—a term which contrasts them sharply with the Pāndi or foreign Sūdras, of whom a large number immigrated into Travancore in later times. Another name by which Nāyars are sometimes known is Malayāli, but other castes, which have long inhabited the Malayālam country, can lay claim to this designation with equal propriety. The most general title of the Nāyars is Pillai (child), which was once added to the names of the Brāhman dwellers in the south. It must, in all probability, have

* Lives of the Lindsays. By Lord Lindsay, 1849.

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174 The opinion was expressed by Mr. (now Sir Henry) Winterbotham, one of the Malabar Marriage Commissioners, that the Brahman tāli-tier was a relic of the time when the Nambūtiris were entitled to the first fruits, and it was considered the high privilege of every Nāyar maid to be introduced by them to womanhood. In this connection, reference may be made to Hamilton's 'New Account of the East Indies', where it is stated that [793] "when the Zamorin marries, he must not cohabit with his bride till the Nambūdri, or chief priest, has enjoyed her, and he, if he pleases, may have three nights of her company, because the first fruits of her nuptials must be an holy oblation to the god she worships. And some of the nobles are so complaisant as to allow the clergy the same tribute, but the common people cannot have that compliment paid to them, but are forced to supply the priests' places themselves."

585 588 Of those who gave evidence before the Malabar Commission, some thought the tāli-kettu was a marriage, some not. Others called it a mock marriage, a formal marriage, a sham marriage, a fictitious marriage, a marriage sacrament, the preliminary part of marriage, a meaningless ceremony, an empty form, a ridiculous farce, an incongruous custom, a waste of money, and a device for becoming involved in debt. "While," the report states, "a small minority of strict conservatives still maintain that the tāli-kettu is a real marriage intended to confer on the bridegroom a right to cohabit with the bride, an immense majority describe it as a fictitious marriage, the origin of which they are at a loss to explain. And another large section tender the explanation accepted by our President (Sir T. Muttusami Aiyar) that, in some way or other, it is an essential caste observance preliminary to the forming of sexual relations."

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In a recent note, Mr. K. Kannan Nāyar writes*: "Almost every Nāyar officer in Government employ, when applying for leave on account of the kettukalliānam of his daughter or niece, states in his application that he has to attend to the 'marriage' of the girl. The ceremony is generally mentioned as marriage even in the letters of invitation sent by Nāyar gentlemen in these days.

This ceremony is not intended even for the betrothal of the girl to a particular man, but is one instituted under Brāhman influence as an important kriya (sacrament) antecedent to marriage, and intended, as the popular saying indicates, for dubbing the girl with the status of Amma, a woman fit to be married. The saying is Tāli-kettiu Amma āyi, which means a woman has become an Amma when her tali-tying ceremony is over."

In summing up the evidence collected by him, Mr. L. Moore states† that it seems to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that "from the sixteenth century at all events, and up to the early portion of the nineteenth century, the relations between the sexes in families governed by marumakkattayam were of as loose a description as it is possible to imagine. The tāli-kettu kalyānam, introduced by the Brāhmans, brought about no improvement, and indeed in all probability made matters much worse by giving a quasi-religious sanction to a fictitious marriage, which bears an unpleasant resemblance to the sham marriage ceremonies performed among certain inferior castes elsewhere as a cloak for prostitution. As years passed, some time about the opening of the nineteenth century, the Kērala Mahatmyam and Keralolpathi were concocted, probably by Nambūdris, and false and pernicious doctrines as to the obligations laid on the

* Malabar Quart. Review, VII, 3, 1908. † *Op. cit.*

15: Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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588 178 174 [585] [613] Nāyars by divine law to administer to the lust of the Nambūdris were disseminated abroad. The better classes among the Nāyars revolted against the degrading custom thus established, and a custom sprang up, especially in North Malabar, of making sambandham a more or less formal contract, approved and sanctioned by the karnavan (senior male) of the tarwad to which the lady belonged, and celebrated with elaborate ceremony under the pudamuri form. That there was 585 [174] nothing analogous to the pudamuri prevalent in Malabar from A.D. 1550 to 1800 may, I think, be fairly presumed from the absence of all allusion to it in the works of the various European writers." According to Act IV, Madras, 1896, sambandham means an alliance between a man and a woman, by reason of which they in accordance with the custom of the community to which they belong, or either of them belongs, cohabit or intend to cohabit as husband and wife.

Of sambandham the following account was given by Mr. Chandu Menon to the Malabar Marriage Commission. "The variations of the sambandham are the pudamuri, vastradānam, uzhamporukkuka, vitāram kayaruka, etc., which are local expressions hardly understood beyond the localities in which they are used, but there would be hardly a Malaiyāli who would not readily understand what is meant by sambandham tudanguga (to begin sambandham). The meaning of this phrase, which means to 'marry,' is understood throughout Kēralam in the same way, and there can be no ambiguity or mistake about it. It is thus found that sambandham is the principal word denoting marriage among marumakkatāyam [192] [184] Nāyars. [Sambandhakāran is now the common term for husband.] It will also be found, on a close and careful examination of facts, that the principal features of this

13;Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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would seem to be a relic of the days of the Roman pugiles using the cestus in combat. The position taken up by the combatants is much the same as that of the pugiles. The Romans were familiar with Malabar from about 30 B.C. to the decline of their power.* We may safely assume that the 3,000 lbs. of pepper, which Alaric demanded as part of the ransom of Rome when he besieged the city in the fifth century, came from Malabar." Swinging on the uzhinjal, and dancing to the accompaniment of merry songs, are said to be characteristic amusements of the womankind during Ōnam festival, and, on the Patinaram Makam, or sixteenth day after Thiruvonam. This amusement is indulged in by both sexes. It is noted by Mr. Fawcett that "the cloths given as Ōnam presents are yellow, or some part of them is yellow. There must be at least a yellow stripe or a small patch of yellow in a corner, which suggests a relic of sun-worship in a form more pronounced than that which obtains at present. It is a harvest festival, about the time when the first crop of paddy (rice) is harvested."

Concerning another important festival in Malabar, the Thiruvathira, Mr. T. K. Gopal Panikkar writes as follows.† "Thiruvathira is one of the three great national occasions of Malabar. It generally comes off in the Malayālam month of Dhanu (December or January) on the day called the Thiruvathira day. It is essentially a festival in which females are almost exclusively concerned, and lasts for but a single day. The popular conception of it is that it is in commemoration of the death of Kāmadēvan, the Cupid of our national mythology. As recorded in the old Purānas, Kāmadēvan

* See Thurston. Catalogde of Roman, etc., Coins, Madras Government Museum, 2nd ed., 1894.

† Malabar and its Folk, 1900.

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23: Peter .E-3 (1938-?) AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4
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stinct and for the orderly social procreation of offspring. Formally, it is more difficult to say why this institution has taken on this curious appearance. As far as I know, authors so far have been rather at a loss to furnish a satisfactory explanation. Many, of course, have been given, with a great amount of variety in their choice.

For instance, we are given historical explanations. In India they say people have been polyandrous for many centuries; that there are indications, such as archaeological (about the Heftalite Huns, 6th c. A.D.) and literary (the Indian epic poem, the Mahabarata), that the people in this area, both Aryan and non-Aryan, were polyandrous in antiquity. Economic reasons for this have been given; *i.e.*, that the country is poor, that nomadism among Todas or Tibetans, in earlier times, perhaps led to a polyandrous society in order to limit the number of children. Then, demographical explanations have been given, that there is an excess of males over females in this society, and that they have to be polyandrous for that reason. For instance, the Todas practise female infanticide and this is given as a reason for their polyandry. Their men drink a lot of milk, and some people say that the fact that they have more proteins in their diet in this fashion produces more male offspring than female. I do not pretend to know how far this biological explanation is true. Sociological reasons have also been given, namely, that the men travel and have to leave one brother at home with the wife (a reason which I hinted at earlier). In east and south India, the people known as the Nayars, who once could also be called polyandrous, had a very definite military organization (somewhat like that of the Sikhs in the north), and that has been given as a reason why a people is polyandrous: one brother can always remain at home with the wife while the other is away serving with the colors.

It seems to me that these explanations are not sufficient. As far as the historical

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India

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Besides the English books belonging to the English-speaking brothers, 12 other families own a total number of 16 vernacular (paper) books. They are all puranic stories. There are 30 palm-leaf manuscripts in all, which either are puranic stories or deal with such subjects as conjuring and black arts. There are also some Vedic manuscripts in the family of the jenmi.

Village administration.—There is no panchayat. The village has a Government official "Adhikari" who collects the revenue. He has also given a little civil and criminal authority which however is rarely made use of. There is another official "Menon" who is the surveyor and assessor of taxes on lands, etc.

There is practically no sanitary administration. Sometimes a vaccinator visits the country and gets some children vaccinated.

There is a Police station at Chalisseri which has jurisdiction over this place. Weekly or monthly one constable pays a visit and makes a report that the king's peace is kept scrupulously.

The Tahsildar or the Revenue Inspector or a Land Records Inspector may sometimes pay a visit to the amsam officials, but he sees none of the people.

For some time past, thefts have been increasing in this desam. A few youths, born and bred up in rank illiteracy, are straying away from the path of righteousness, and the poor man's property is becoming insecure. Recently this has come to the notice of the police and they have begun to have a watchful eye over some of them. But none of these have been yet of a serious nature.

There are a small number of law-suits against the ryots by the jenmis at all times, but over and above this there is not much litigation. But recently however there arose two law suits between ryots which were the result of bad blood and high words.

Small cases were dealt with satisfactorily by the village munsif this year.

History and prospects of the village.—Centuries ago, as far back as 1,800 years, this desam must have formed a part of the famous division of Kutnad. The name of the once historic land of Kutnad, which at one time covered the whole of the Mid-Kerala, is now confined to the little desam that lies contiguous to Kothachira. The ruins still traceable on the plains below the Kutnad hill, of temples and a fortress, and the large number of ruined walls seen in the vicinity, suggest the existence of a flourishing city in this spot in the past.

But about Kothachira in the more recent past. The country must at one time have been governed by local chieftains from whose hands the Brahman jenmis who now hold the lands got them with the advent of the age of Brahmanic dominance. There are families which still hold the name of "Naduvashis," i.e., the governors of the country, who are now labourers and landless ryots. They still cling with faith and reverence to their old traditions and ceremonial forms which they practised when they were masters of the country.

But within the past few generations itself there has been a great economic change noticeable. There are old men still living who can attest to the state of things thirty or forty years ago. From them, we hear the rise and fall of some of the families. Those